

Message Text

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TO AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

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SUBJECT: PRESS STORY ON VISAS FOR CANTON FAIR

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT UPI STORY DATELINED HONG KONG
APRIL 16. PRESS GUIDANCE SENT SEPTTEL.

2. BEGIN TEXT.

CHINESE AUTHORITIES HAVE FAILED - SO FAR - TO GRANT VISAS
TO TWO U.S. OFFICIALS SCHEDULED TO HELP STAFF AN OFFICE
ASSISTING AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN AT THE CANTON TRADE FAIR,
WHICH OPENED MONDAY.

THE TWO OFFICIALS FROM THE U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL IN
HONG KONG HAD EXPECTED TO BE IN THE SOUTH CHINA CITY IN
TIME FOR THE OPENING OF THE SPRING SESSION OF THE TWICE-A-
YEAR FAIR, CHINA'S BIGGEST SALES SHOW, ACCORDING TO
AMERICAN SOURCES.

THERE WAS NO INDICATION WHEN THEIR VISA REQUESTS WOULD BE
GRANTED, IF AT ALL. THE CHINESE RARELY TURN DOWN VISA
REQUESTS; THEY USUALLY JUST FAIL TO REPLY.

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THE TWO OFFICIALS FROM THE CONSULATE'S COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS

SECTION WERE TO HAVE JOINED A DIPLOMAT FROM THE U.S. LIAISON OFFICE IN PEKING AT THE FAIR. AT THE LAST FAIR THE OFFICE WAS MAINTAINED JOINTLY BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM PEKING AND HONG KONG.

CONSULATE OFFICIALS WERE RELUCTANT TO TALK ABOUT THE MATTER. A SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE VISA REQUESTS HAD NOT BEEN REJECTED.

"THERE JUST HAS BEEN NO RESPONSE YET," HE SAID.

DAVID DEAN, THE NO. 2 MAN AT THE CONSULATE AND THE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS REGARDING CHINA, ALSO WAS EVASIVE ABOUT THE MATTER. "WE CAN TAKE YOUR QUESTIONS AND SEND THEM ON," HE SAID.

ASKED IF HE HAD ANTICIPATED HAVING THE CONSULATE REPRESENTATIVES IN CANTON FOR MONDAY'S OPENING, DEAN REPLIED AFTER MUCH HESITATION: "YOU CAN DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS."

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHINA TRAVEL SERVICE AND THE CHINESE GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN HONG KONG, WHICH HANDLE ARRANGEMENTS FOR VISITORS TO THE FAIR, HAD NO COMMENT.

THE OFFICE IN CANTON'S TUNG FANG HOTEL, WHICH HOUSES MOST OF THE AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN VISITING THE FAIR, IS NOW STAFFED BY A MEMBER OF THE PEKING LIAISON OFFICE.

AN ESTIMATED 200 AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN ARE EXPECTED TO VISIT THE MONTH-LONG EVENT. CHINESE AUTHORITIES HAVE MADE IT KNOWN TO U.S. OFFICIALS THAT THEY WANT SERIOUS BUYERS FROM THE UNITED STATES RATHER THAN PEOPLE GOING OUT OF CURIOSITY AS HAS OFTEN BEEN THE CASE IN THE PAST. END TEXT. KISSINGER

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